



Morning Alert - Friday, August 3, 2018

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## HEADLINES

### Morning news

NHK gave top play to the extreme heat throughout Japan. NTV led with a report on the revelation that Tokyo Medical University deducted points from the entrance exams of female applicants to keep the ratio of women students at around 30%. TBS and TV Asahi gave top play to reports that the chairman of the Japan Amateur Boxing Federation allegedly forced referees to rig decisions in favor of boxers from his home prefecture of Nara.

Major front-page items in national papers included Tokyo Medical University's alleged discrimination against female applicants, the U.S.'s proposal to raise tariffs on Chinese imports from 10% to 25%, Sharp's decision to halt production of TVs, refrigerators, and other domestic appliances in Japan, and a maritime survey allegedly being conducted by an ROK government ship near the disputed Takeshima Islands in the Sea of Japan.

## INTERNATIONAL

### President Trump thanks Kim Jong Un for returning remains of fallen Americans

All national papers except Asahi highlighted a tweet posted by President Trump on Thursday in which he thanked Kim Jong Un for keeping his word and starting the process of sending home the remains of American troops who were killed in the Korean War. The President added: "I am not at all surprised that you took this kind action. Also, thank you for

your nice letter - I look forward to seeing you soon!" The President was reportedly referring to a letter he received from Chairman Kim, in which, according to White House Press Secretary Sanders, the DPRK leader expressed his commitment to work toward "complete denuclearization." Yomiuri speculated that the U.S. and North Korea may be making arrangements for their leaders to meet again sometime in the near future, possibly on the sidelines of the annual UN General Assembly conference in New York in September.

### **Foreign Minister Kono holds talks with Chinese counterpart**

All dailies wrote that Foreign Minister Kono and his Chinese counterpart Wang met in Singapore yesterday and pledged mutual efforts to further improve bilateral relations by arranging reciprocal visits by Prime Minister Abe and President Xi. The top diplomats agreed that when Abe travels to China later this year, the two governments will put together concrete plans for economic cooperation, including private-sector collaboration in third countries. They also reportedly affirmed the importance of maintaining the free trade system.

### **Japan, ROK convene foreign ministerial meeting**

Mainichi wrote that Foreign Minister Kono and South Korean Foreign Minister Kang held talks in Singapore on Thursday and affirmed enhanced trilateral cooperation with the U.S. to achieve the denuclearization of North Korea. Kono reportedly requested that South Korean President Moon visit Japan later this year to further deepen bilateral ties.

### **South Korea allegedly conducts maritime survey off Takeshima**

Sankei led with a report claiming that a South Korean government research ship has apparently been carrying out a maritime probe in the vicinity of the Takeshima Islands (Liancourt Rocks) in the Sea of Japan since Wednesday, noting that the "abnormal" course of the vessel may indicate that it is conducting a survey of the plankton population. The GOJ reportedly plans to lodge a protest if the allegation is confirmed since the survey would be taking place within Japan's territorial waters.

### **ASEAN ministers expresses "concern" about situation in South China Sea**

All papers reported on the ASEAN foreign ministerial meeting held in Singapore on Thursday, after which the participants issued a joint statement voicing concern about the situation in the South China Sea. The papers said that although the participants apparently had China's militarization of the South China Sea in mind, they stopped short of mentioning China by name. The ministers in attendance also welcomed the U.S.-DPRK summit in June,

expressing support for the “complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization” of the Korean Peninsula.

### **Foreign Minister Kono voices support for Iran nuclear deal**

Yomiuri and Nikkei took up a meeting in Singapore on Thursday between Foreign Minister Kono and Iranian Foreign Minister Zarif, during which the Japanese minister noted that Tokyo is encouraged by the fact that the Iranian government is abiding by the Iran nuclear agreement. In reply, the Iranian official welcomed Japan’s support for the accord. Kono explained to Zarif that the GOJ and the USG have held consultations on the pact.

### **Japan preparing to implement pact with U.S. on curbing serious crimes**

Asahi wrote that the National Police Agency has drafted guidelines for the implementation of the agreement with the U.S. on preventing and combating serious crimes (PCSC) that was signed in 2014, explaining that this will enable the two nations’ investigative authorities to exchange data on fingerprints of suspects in heinous crimes for cross-checking.

## **ECONOMY**

### **Japan to seek quick results in new trade talks with U.S.**

Yomiuri wrote that the GOJ is aiming to produce quick results in the new trade talks to be held with the U.S. based on the assessment that if the negotiations are prolonged, the Trump administration may step up pressure on Japan to open its auto and agricultural markets. Conjecturing that Prime Minister Abe may hold talks with President Trump on the margins of the annual UN General Assembly session in New York in late September, the daily claimed that some GOJ officials reckon that Japan will need to come up with deliverables that will satisfy the U.S. leader ahead of the purported summit.

### **Trade minister seeks Indiana governor’s support for Japan’s bid to forestall auto tariffs**

Yomiuri and Mainichi wrote that Trade Minister Seko held talks with Indiana Governor Holcomb in Indianapolis on Wednesday and asked for his understanding for Tokyo’s efforts to dissuade the Trump administration from imposing additional tariffs on Japanese cars. The minister reportedly stressed that Japan’s auto exports do not harm U.S. national security and that Japanese investment has contributed to the U.S. economy. According to Mainichi, the Indiana leader concurred with Seko’s opinion, telling the Japanese visitor that he will lobby the Trump administration through Vice President Pence, his predecessor, and other channels.

## **Japan to establish fund to finance infrastructure projects in U.S.**

Nikkei wrote that the GOJ plans to launch a sovereign wealth fund to invest in American infrastructure initiatives in a bid to head off U.S. trade pressure. The purported state-backed fund will help finance infrastructure construction in the U.S. and invest in joint U.S.-Japanese projects in other countries. The fund may also cooperate with the Indo-Pacific investment initiative announced earlier this week by Secretary of State Pompeo. Japan might cite the fund as a concrete example of bilateral economic cooperation with the U.S. during new trade talks that will start in Washington on Aug. 9.

### **AMBASSADOR**

## **Ambassador Hagerty to attend Hiroshima peace ceremony**

Hiroshima-based Chugoku Shimbun wrote yesterday that final arrangements are underway for Ambassador Hagerty to attend this year's peace memorial ceremony to be held at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park on Aug. 6, saying that this will be the first time for a U.S. envoy to take part in the event since the advent of the Trump administration. The daily added that ahead of his trip to Hiroshima, the Ambassador will attend a Boy Scout jamboree in Ishikawa Prefecture where he plans to meet with participants from Hiroshima to learn about the annual peace ceremony and the damage caused by the heavy rain and flooding in the prefecture.

### **SECURITY**

## **MOD to hold briefing on Aegis Ashore for local residents**

Yomiuri wrote that Mayor Fujimichi of Hagi, Yamaguchi Prefecture, met with a senior MOD official yesterday, who responded positively to the municipal chief's request for the ministry to organize a briefing for city residents regarding its plan to deploy an Aegis Ashore battery at a local SDF camp.